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COMMONWEAL

THE HIGH COST OF COLLEGE EDUCATION

Dennis O'Brien

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To the Editors

Homeless? Go West!

Sorry to hear about your lost lease. Maybe now's the time to consider forsaking the Apple for the Heartland, where the living is easy: Twin Cities, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Madison....Schools are decent, money goes further, and the people—well, you know about them already. Right?

CHUCK FEIT
Palatine, Ill.

From the editors: We've had similar suggestions (invitations?) from upstate New York, California, and West Virginia. Well, we're willing to cross the Hudson, but not to split from our spouses, whom we love dearly and who help pay the rent, lug the groceries, and do the dishes.

Slick, sleek, slippery?

I didn't realize how culturally stuck I was until I got my first glossy-paper issue of *Commonweal*. Ever since my undergraduate days at Saint Mary's College (Winona, Minnesota) in the early sixties when I first discovered your magazine, I've respected and expected the simple newsprint paper that symbolized straightforward, no-glitz journalism and a certain implied dedication to the basics in life. That was *Commonweal*.

Now this. Are you trying to be slick, to be like *Forbes*, or *Fortune*, or *Newsweek*? Or is there a no-brainer explanation like: "Hey, that newsprint costs too much," or "We got a deal from Louie on the glossy," or "This is the '90s and who'll take us seriously if we look like garbage wrapping?"

Would you take six lines in the next issue to tell this retro-person why you did it? There's enough change-for-change's-sake in this unstable world.

GENE AUDETTE
Saint Paul, Minn.

From the editors: Readers may be surprised to learn that no-glitz newsprint looks cheap but isn't—at least, not at the moment. Its price went through the stratosphere in the most recent up-cycle of paper prices. (One Texas daily newspaper went out of business for this reason.) At that point we were already printing on smoother (please, not *slicker*) paper called Baxter; now we use Choctaw matté. The price of Choctaw has surged as well, but—believe it or not—right now it still costs somewhat less than basic newsprint. No, we're not trying to be like *Forbes* or *Fortune*, but like them we are subject to market forces. We hope never to have to go back to stone tablets, but given another price swing newsprint may do a comeback.

The sanctions on Iraq

In his "War by Other Means" [February 28], author Kenneth Himes offers moral criteria for judging the use of economic sanctions but leaves it to readers to apply the criteria to specific cases. One that cries out for such an ethical review is our seven-year embargo of Iraq.

Sanctions, says Himes, should be effective in attaining a defined goal. In the case of Iraq, where the goal is to oust Saddam Hussein, sanctions are ineffective. Former United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali called the prospect of removing the Iraqi leader "unlikely to be affected" by the plight of the Iraqi people. Most U.S. analysts agree.

Sanctions should not impose greater hardships than the situation they seek to remedy. Yet according to the United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 4,500 Iraqi children under age five are dying each month from hunger and disease, preventable deaths directly traceable to the embargo. That's one child every ten minutes! And, no, the recent UN "oil for food" resolution—still awaiting implementation—will not eliminate this human suffering. Much of the proceeds from the oil sales goes to Kuwaitis, Kurds, and UN monitors; individual Iraqis will get about twenty-cents-a-day worth of aid.

Sanctions should be imposed incrementally to allow for a negotiated settlement. Yet, the embargo of Iraq has been harsh and comprehensive from day one. In addition to vital foodstuffs and medicines, the list of proscribed materials contains such inexplicable items as light bulbs, socks, and wristwatches.

Commenting on the number of Iraqi children who have died because of our sanctions—more than the combined toll of two atomic bombs on Japan or the deaths caused by "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia—now Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said in a May 1996 interview on "60 Minutes": "It's a hard decision, but we think the price....is worth it."

Sanctions should be imposed multilaterally and should have the support of countries surrounding the target nation. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the U.S.-backed sanctions were supported by most of the world's nations, including Iraq's neighbors. Recently, however, as the enormity of the situation is grasped, both Arab and European nations have made no secret of their desire to have the sanctions lifted.

A recent [February 9] *Washington Post* editorial called on the United States to put aside geopolitical strategy and extend famine relief to North Korea, a country it called "undoubtedly the world's least deserving country." "U.S. policy," the editorial went on, "has long held that starving people should be fed, no matter how evil their rulers." So why not Iraq?

JOHN F. MAHONEY
New York, N.Y.

The writer is executive director of Americans for Middle East Understanding.

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COMMONWEAL

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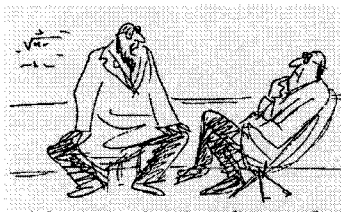

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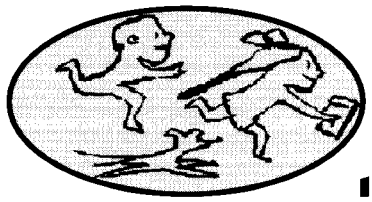

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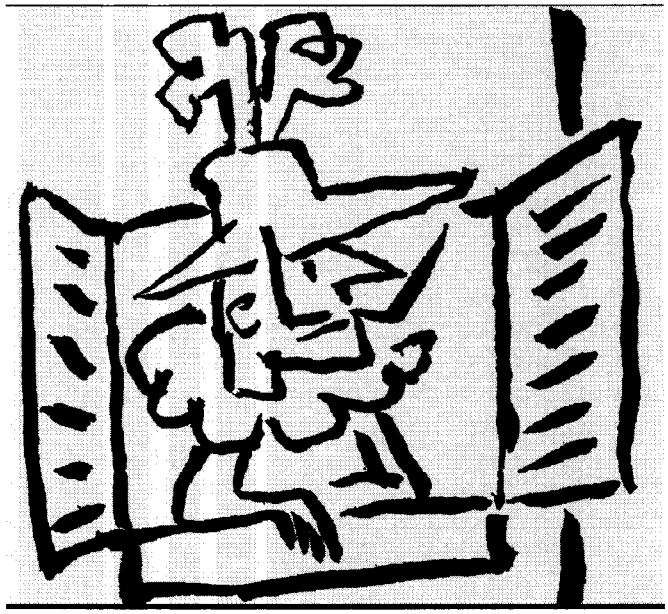

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Islam & women

The articles on Islam in the January 31 issue were interesting and informative. Though I know enough not to trust stereotypes of hysterical, chanting, terrorist Muslims as being at all representative of the vast majority of Muslims, I have never taken the time to read a book or two about Islam to understand what Muslims believe and how their beliefs translate into everyday living.

The Islamic recognition that "each of us has a built-in destiny to return all that we have received to the One from whom we have received it" is powerful and compelling. The *umma*, or communal aspect of Islam, is a needed antidote to the overly privatized focus of our American culture. And looking for the religious roots of the "keen sense of hospitality" that David Burrell observed in the Muslim world was an interesting exploration.

But helpful as the articles by John Esposito and David Burrell were for me, I was left wondering whether there are religious roots in Islam for the strong bias against women that seems apparent among Muslims. It is common to hear or read reports of women being beaten or killed for refusing to veil their faces, or that women are prohibited from working outside the home, or, most appalling of all, that ritual, sexual mutilation of women is still a common practice among some Muslims.

Do these practices have roots in mainstream Islam, or are reports of them additional examples of media focus on extremist, aberrant factions among Muslims? And how does the idea of *umma* relate to the role of women in Muslim societies? To an outsider, it sounds rather like the thinking of some fundamentalist Christian groups that subjugate women to the community's needs—and, not incidentally, to men. I would appreciate some enlightenment from either or both of your authors.

ROBERT BEEZAT
Rolling Meadows, Ill.

The author replies:

Please excuse the brevity of this reponse to Robert Beezat's letter, which was forwarded to me here in Southeast Asia. The question is an important one. Islam, like Christianity and Buddhism, has universally accepted, essential beliefs/practices such as the Five Pillars of Islam. Beyond that, there has been and is a rich diversity of belief and practice. The Islamic tradition is the product of text and context, revelation and human interpretation.

Historically, the primary, if not sole, interpreters of Islamic law were males functioning in and conditioned by patriarchal societies. Therefore, the issue is not religious roots; it is patriarchy. Religion was interpreted within and for patriarchal societies and thus was used to legitimate beliefs and practices.

Just as the issue of women's status and role in the other Abrahamic traditions has been affected by a patriarchal past, so too in the twentieth century Muslims have faced the issues of reinterpretation and reform, of determining what is essential and unchanging versus that which is subject to change. The questions have ranged from those of marriage and divorce to those of veiling and employment. As in the past, so today one finds a diversity of interpretations in the Islamic community (*umma*). The definition of modest dress, of women's role in public life, or of employment differs markedly from one Muslim country or region to another. Today, there are many new voices, those of women as well as men, who seek to reexamine their Islamic tradition to respond to changing realities. Finally, regarding the abuse of women in Muslim societies: Yes, it exists. As in the West, women face discrimination, oppression, and abuse. But to attribute abuses primarily to religion is to offer an easy answer to a complex set of social problems. For example, sexual mutilation (clitorodectomy) in Africa is not practiced across the Muslim world but rather is a regional practice adopted and legitimated by some Muslims and some non-Muslims alike. We must remember that, in the hands of their interpreters, religious traditions or ideologies can be a source of inspiration and liberation or of oppression.

JOHN L. ESPOSITO
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Women, families, power

Re: Mary Ann Glendon's "Feminism & the Family" [February 14]:

I believe it is possible to harmonize women's and men's roles in social and economic life with their desires (and their children's needs) for a decent family life. But I believe that the most important obstacles exist at a level deeper than the realms of politics and governances, in still-surviving attitudes which more or less take for granted that women and families are to serve the needs of institutions, rather than the other way round.

The "sacrificial" role that women have traditionally been encouraged to embrace has left them vulnerable, and still contributes to our current dilemmas. Feminization of poverty, growing populations of dependent elderly women, disturbing implications of the campaign for legitimizing assisted suicide—all have ties to these attitudes and assumptions. Today, women working outside the home are experiencing the same biases that stay-at-home mothers have encountered: Their years of service don't count much, their effort and skill aren't valued, and when they get sick or old or are "downsized" nobody really cares.

Though we may not consider ourselves card-carrying feminists, we are profoundly affected by the political,

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Cloning isn't sexy

From Scotland comes news that a team of fearless scientists has cloned a sheep. One might consider this development one worrisome step for sheep, but more likely it is a very big and very dangerous step for humankind.

"Dolly," as she was christened, was produced in a laboratory where a cell taken from the udder of one sheep was fused with another sheep's egg, from which the nucleus had been removed. The resulting embryo was then implanted in a surrogate mother and brought to term. Dolly is the genetic twin of the sheep from whom the cell was first taken, and her arrival promises benefits in scientific knowledge, agriculture, and medicine.

Dolly caused an uproar in large part because, though theoretically possible, it had long proved technically unfeasible to clone mammals. It is now expected that it is only a matter of time before someone succeeds in cloning the most successful mammal of all—namely, humans. At this point in the conquest of nature by science, it is important to reassert that not everything that can be done should be done. Even Ian Wilmut, the scientist chiefly responsible for bringing Dolly into the world, considers the idea of cloning human beings "offensive..., ethically unacceptable." His instincts are sound. However, a critical observer might also ask why someone opposed to the likely uses of this technology nevertheless decided to set us off on this path.

Some embrace the prospect of manufacturing human life in laboratories. Such thinking seems more a confirmation of the modern trivialization of the meaning of sex than any sober assessment of what is at stake when technology plays so large a part in human reproduction. The Catholic position on these questions is clear-cut—perhaps too clear-cut. Because it draws the line on intervention in procreation at contraception, the church's often astute warnings about the dehumanizing of sex and reproduction have fallen on deaf ears. That's unfortunate, because the human values the church rightly defends in questioning advanced reproductive technologies make its hair-splitting over "barrier methods" and the so-called "contraceptive mentality" seem like mere intellectualized prudery. In reality, much more is at stake.

There are sound moral reasons why human communities have always tied sexual desire to love, and love to marriage, and marriage to the care of children. Neither the extreme view demanding that every sexual act be "open" to procreation, nor the modern presumption that we should be free to desexualize and depersonalize the act of procreation is the best way to promote human flourishing. But where to draw the line along the continuum of interventions is difficult. In the acceptance of each new technology—artificial insemination, *in vitro* fertilization, surrogate motherhood—a logic of justification is advanced that makes the next moral hurdle seem lower still. Yet as Dr. Wilmut's own trepidation attests, there is widespread uneasiness over giving scientists and potential DNA donors the ability to determine the entire genetic make-up of new human lives. Cloning, with the genetic manipulation and engineering it heralds, may be a line even many who champion "reproductive freedom" will not want to cross.

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Still, it is argued that clones ought to be considered little more than "delayed twins." That is true, in a strictly genetic sense. Certainly identical twins occur in nature. But why should anyone be allowed to determine the *entire* genetic identity of another person? Granting such power over someone else's life—even the life of one's own offspring—is an unwarranted circumscribing of individuality and human possibility. We simply don't have the right to decide such things for others. Parents are entrusted with the lives of their children; they are not the owners or determiners of those lives. As Daniel Callahan has written (*New York Times*, February 26, 1997), cloning "would be a profound threat to what might be called the right to our own identity."

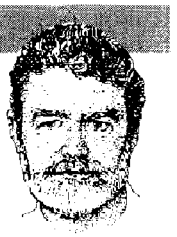
Human cloning would play havoc with notions of parenthood, kinship, the distinct dignity of children in regard to their parents, and perhaps even the sanctity of life. The possibilities for mischief seem endless, and endlessly dizzying. A woman could, for example, give birth to her own twin. As with justification for most reproductive technologies, the desire of an infertile couple for a genetic child may prove to be the most compelling reason for resorting to cloning. Infertility can be a terrible personal loss. Still, infertility is not sufficient justification for any and all means of bringing a child into the world. Cloning would represent yet a further commodification of procreation; in its asexual method of reproduction and the genetic asymmetry of the child produced, cloning further relativizes the most fundamental of human relationships: that of wife and husband and parents and children. Technological wizardry must not be allowed to undermine monogamous marriage and the biological family. Science and technology should serve the common good, not its own self-aggrandizing imperatives or mere individual desire.

When it comes to cloning, we are a bit like a gardener who thinks she can manage the ecology of an entire forest. There is too much we do not know, too much we can never know. Worse, in almost every respect—from the discarding of "surplus" embryos to the possible creation of genetic monstrosities—cloning requires that we regard another human being as a means to an end, and not as an end in itself. Indeed, the very attempt to clone humans constitutes experimentation (it is not a medical procedure) on someone who is incapable of giving consent, a violation of the most fundamental principles of medicine and science. In sum, like abortion and euthanasia, cloning human beings moves us a step closer to an openly utilitarian definition of human dignity and life.

Justified in the name of scientific progress and humanitarian relief, cloning will be a powerful temptation. Yet the intuition that tells us there is something inherently inhuman in the laboratory production of human beings is sound. Science and technology enable us to transcend our physical limitations, but in doing so we run the risk at a certain point of betraying our true natures. In the creation of children it is important that we prize our full, embodied humanity, and not just one aspect of it. When it comes to separating reproduction from human sexuality, the siren call of scientific progress is largely a ruse. The kind of control over human life and destiny promised by these new reproductive technologies is far too potent to be left in the hands of scientists or anyone else. As our brave new world of self-creation unfolds, we must guard against progress in the name of humanity that in fact dehumanizes.

OF SEVERAL MINDS

JOHN GARVEY



THE MYSTERY REMAINS

What cloning can't reproduce

Years ago Gore Vidal said that he thought human beings had already been cloned. "Anyone who says 'Have a nice day' is a clone," he said. "There's a big loaf of them and they just keep slicing them off."

When a Scottish researcher cloned a sheep recently, the event set off another round of joking, some of it quite funny; it also led, predictably, to serious comments by ethicists, theologians, and scientists. Almost everyone seems to assume that human beings will one day be cloned, and that the uses to which cloned humans might be put range from the nightmarish to the ludicrous. People could be grown for body parts—a liver with your exact DNA would probably not need an anti-rejection drug if it were transplanted. One startling suggestion was that a dying child could be cloned, as a sort of replacement kid. There were other ethical problems: a number of fertilized embryos were destroyed along the way toward cloning the sheep.

In an article in the *New York Times* Gustav Niebuhr quoted Notre Dame's Richard McCormick, who said that the obvious motives for cloning a human were "the very reasons you should not." To attempt to create people with specific characteristics is to make single or multiple aspects of being human more important than the "beautiful whole that is the human person." This gets it about right, I think. A more alarming sentiment was expressed by Nancey Murphy of the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. She said she hoped that ethicists "would concentrate their efforts on saying what we should do with this, rather than saying it shouldn't be done, because people have rightly said it can't be prevented."

How's that? If something can be done and will be done we shouldn't say that it shouldn't be done? Apply that to genocide or euthanasia. Or for that matter the torture of small children. Knowing that adultery and murder will

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happen does not lead us to ask how they can best be used; we have to say these things shouldn't be done at all. The role of the ethicist is not to refrain from such judgments, but very often to make them.

Some things are clear: A cloned human being is still a human being, with all sorts of individual complications. In essence, cloning is the artificial fashioning of an identical twin, one that will be younger than its sibling. As in the case of identical twins, the similarities will be intriguing, but so will the inevitable differences.

The real danger is the way the process moves us ever closer to the idea of the human being as product or property. Prisoners in China have been used as involuntary organ donors. A doctor I know has been asked more than once to determine the sex of an unborn child; if the child turned out to be a female, the parents planned to abort it. There is something Nazi-like about wanting to create "desirable" human beings, but we already use people as if they were property (as in the case of the prisoners) or try to create desirable children (as in the case of people who prefer male to female babies). The argument that we have a right to choose our time of death or to abort a child is similar: "Whose life, or whose body, is it anyway?" Our answer must be: not yours, not mine, and not the state's. The body is not a form of property at all, except to a slavemaster.

There are ethicists who have no problem with the idea of cloning itself, but who worry only about its potential for misuse. This strikes me as being tone-deaf to mystery, to any sense of the sacred. The loss of this sense is almost a hallmark of our age, and in some sense the churches have been complicit in it. When churchgoers cannot find any sense of the sacred or of mystery in liturgy, where will they begin to learn to see it in natural processes or the physical world? "Mystery" has taken on a muddled meaning: it is either the "booga booga" stuff that hovers around such TV shows as "The X Files," or it is seen as something so far beyond understanding that we might as well not think about it at all.

But the sense of mystery and glory to be found in the best music (Bach or Arvo Pärt) and in the stillness at the heart of the vision of some wonderful painters and iconographers (Giotto or Andrei Rublev) can be experienced in the presence of natural phenomena, and should be. A reverence for mystery does not put a stop to our understanding or our desire to understand; rather, this desire is deepened. The desire to know is experienced in a context marked by deep humility and gratitude. A sense of the sacred, the ability to be still before the mystery, is something which locates us exactly: we are where we are meant to be, who we are meant to be, in such moments.

When science becomes exclusively reductionist, it loses this sense. But it doesn't need to. Retaining this sense of wonder could lead a scientist to say, "Yes, we can do this; it would be interesting, and wrong." The problem here is partly the confusion of science with technology. That something can be done obviously does not mean that it should be; but without a restoration of the sense of the sacred, of mystery, we will probably not be able to begin to make that argument, or even to understand it ourselves. □

John L. Allen, Jr.

RIORDAN & HAYDEN

Some call them Catholic

The mayoral race in Los Angeles, to be decided on April 8, pits two well-known Irish Catholics against one another, Republican incumbent Richard Riordan and his challenger, Democrat Tom Hayden. Both claim a Catholic heritage, but in divergent ways. Riordan identifies his spirituality with the institutional church; Hayden has crafted a syncretistic belief system that sees Catholicism as but one source of insight among others.

Riordan is a follower of the Reagan doctrine that the best remedy for inner-city poverty and racial division is economic growth. He has slashed corporate taxes and created incentives for businesses to stay in Los Angeles; he recently cut a multimillion dollar deal with Dreamworks, the entertainment colossus, to persuade the company not to abandon its Playa Vista site. He has consistently opposed efforts to legislate a higher minimum wage in Los Angeles, calling the move "anticompetitive" and another instance of intrusive government mandates. As mayor for the last four years he has stressed law and order; though he has failed to meet a 1993 goal of adding 3,000 police, the total number of officers is up. Riordan has been quick to take credit for a decline in violent crime in Los Angeles, though that drop-off mirrors national trends. When pressed to point to measures that have benefited poor and minority citizens during his tenure, Riordan cites this increase in safety.

Hayden, a state senator, has endorsed a living-wage ordinance, calling it a simple matter of social justice, and has condemned the pro-growth economic development strategy of Riordan. Hayden claims these policies have benefited the affluent periphery of the city at the expense of its poor and minority citizens. He is critical of the political/commercial establishment he believes controls City Hall. He has lambasted the culture of backroom deal-making he sees as characteristic of Riordan's term, and has promised to conduct city business out in the open. He has charged Riordan and his allies with ethical and financial improprieties, though Riordan takes only $1 a year in salary from the city. Hayden has called for an inner-city jobs program, stronger environmental protection, and revitalized public schools.

Riordan, a believer in private solutions to public problems, has brought his considerable personal fortune to bear on city needs. His personal sponsorship reopened the Eastside Boys

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and Girls Club and funded the Puente Learning Center. When a teacher was shot last year by a stray bullet, Riordan paid to bulletproof the glass in the school. Hayden sneers at Riordan's charitable endeavors, suggesting that the mayor is trying to "buy his way into heaven." Instead, Hayden advocates government action to tackle the systemic roots of inadequate community resources and gang violence. Charity, Hayden contends, is no substitute for justice.

The foregoing suggests that Riordan and Hayden split along classic conservative/liberal fault lines. This characterization founders, however, when it comes to one of the chief differences between the two: the locus of power.

Riordan has opposed the breakup of the Los Angeles Unified School District, and the secession of the San Fernando Valley from the City of Los Angeles; Hayden has indicated a willingness to accept both moves under certain conditions. Riordan has made a city-charter reform effort the centerpiece of his reelection bid, the effect of which would be to concentrate greater power in the mayor's office. Hayden has opposed charter reform but has advocated a network of neighborhood councils with real power over zoning, policing, and economic development, possibly the most radical decentralization plan ever advanced in Los Angeles by a candidate for mayor. Riordan, the conservative, thus seems to support more government; Hayden, the liberal, appears to want less. What accounts for this anomaly?

Their experience of Catholicism may throw some light on the question. Riordan has remained a "church Catholic," despite personal strains in his status. Prior to his election as mayor, he served as head of Cardinal Roger Mahony's finance council and led a foundation which raised almost $100 million for Catholic schools. Even with his prochoice stand on abortion and his two divorces, Riordan has maintained close ties with Mahony and the institutional church. He believes that, however imperfect, the church stands for truth in a world threatened by relativism, and the church commands his loyalty.

Hayden has no such loyalty to the institution. As a young man, Hayden was an altar boy in the suburban Detroit parish of Charles Coughlin, the anti-Roosevelt, profascist "radio priest" of the 1930s and '40s. Having worshiped at the altar of American Catholic anticommunism, Hayden later witnessed what he regarded as the bankruptcy of that world view in the rice fields of Vietnam. "Thank God for priests like the Berrigans, but there were too many like Spellman," he has said, explaining that it was Vietnam that broke him loose from allegiance to the hierarchy.

Today, Hayden has trouble convincing people he is really a Catholic. He regards himself as one, but sees Catholicism as but one point of entry into the spiritual universe. (At his most recent wedding, to actress Barbara Williams, a native American shaman officiated). His book, *The Lost Gospel of the Earth* (Sierra Club Books), mines various religious traditions for insights into the sacredness of the earth. "To be involved only in that part of the variety that is you and your kind is to miss the fantastic cosmic unity, which is the revelation of the presence of God," Hayden has said. His personal saints are Francis of Assisi, Thoreau, and Crazy Horse. He calls this "Catholicism with a universal emphasis," arguing that hierarchies that insist upon "one right way" of relating to God are the foremost threat to peace in the world today.

Riordan sees the need for authority to uphold truth; Hayden is suspicious of those who cloak class and organizational interests in spiritual dress. This difference may help to account for the political enigma described above. While generally conservative, Riordan believes in legitimate authority, whether it's law enforcement or a strong role for the mayor. Hayden has a deep skepticism about authority and believes that truth is better served when people are free to call their own shots. Just as Riordan does not always share the neoconservative critique of centralization, Hayden is not always an advocate of traditional liberal statism.

The contrast between Riordan and Hayden offers evidence of how people raised in the Catholic tradition are influenced by it, even when they reject it. No matter who wins the mayoral election in Los Angeles, the city of angels will be led by someone who has wrestled with the Catholic experience. □

John L. Allen, Jr., *is a free-lance writer from Sherman Oaks, California.*

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A 'NECESSARY' OF MODERN LIFE?

A very expensive college education

Dennis O'Brien

In 1844, Middlebury College in Vermont sued one Lyman Chandler for nonpayment of tuition. The college lost. The final verdict was rendered by the Vermont Supreme Court. Mr. Justice Royce summed up: "A collegiate education is not ranked among the necessaries for which an infant can render himself liable for contract." The statement inhabits the realm of common law. Chandler was an "infant"—he was fifteen when he originally enrolled, and thus below the age of majority. Under common law, minors could validly contract for "necessaries": food, lodging, clothing. Was higher education a "necessary"? The court noted that a "common school" education was a necessary since it was "essential to the intelligent discharge of civil, political, and religious duties," but college studies, "though they tend greatly to elevate and adorn personal character, are a source of much private enjoyment, and may justly be expected to prove of public utility..., are far from being necessary in the legal sense." As the court observed: "The mass of our citizens pass through life without [collegiate education]."

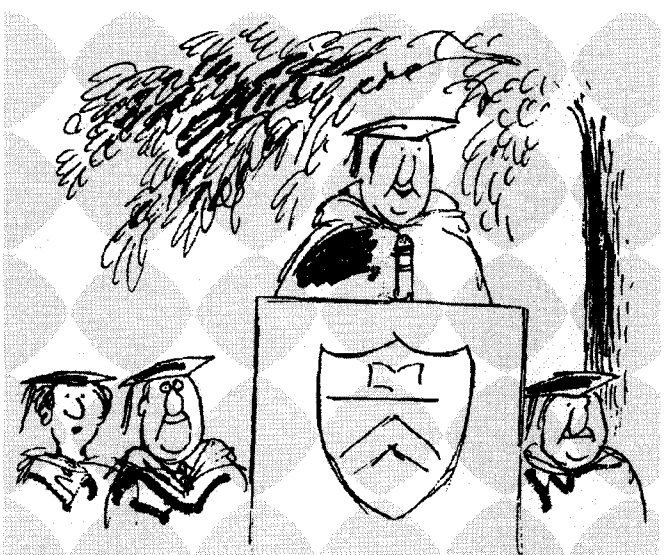
Tuition at Middlebury in 1844 was $20 per quarter (plus $7 for room, sweeping $4, library $2, board in town $50). Chandler couldn't afford it. In 1996-97, Middlebury's comprehensive fee—which includes room, board, and fees—exceeds $28,000 (sweeping thrown in). Could Chandler—can anyone!—afford it? (Middlebury must think so, since it has announced plans to expand the size of its student body.)

I mention this mini-bit of history to give perspective on the issue of the high price of higher education. Reflection all the way back to *Middlebury*. v. *Chandler* indicates the absolutely radical change in the place and price of higher education. Using the wholesale price index as at least a rough measure, costs have risen by a factor of about ten since the 1840s. That should peg current costs at Middlebury at $2490. But a Middlebury education is now over *one hundred times* more expensive than when Chandler could not afford tuition. Neither could most citizens in the nineteenth century, and most would have agreed with the Vermont justices that it was not a "necessary."

It is sobering to consider that higher education has *always been unaffordable*. I call Lyman Chandler as a witness, and the "mass of our citizens" who could not afford college up to the end of World War II. (Before World War II less than 5 percent of the U.S. population had college degrees; today 50 percent of the college-age population receives "postsecondary" instruction.) What changed everything was the G.I. Bill. For the first time in American history, lots of people could afford higher education. Once properly imbued with the college spirit, the G.I.-Bill generation and after were determined that their children should have the same advantage.

If college became somewhat more affordable through government largess (G.I. Bill, vast expansion of public higher education), social perception also changed: college education came to be seen as a "necessary" for economic and social reasons. Sociologist David Riesman claimed that a college degree—any college—is *the* American passport to the middle class. If higher education is perceived as establishing a life position, not a personal adornment, one can even change the philosophy of funding. Like housing, education is a life necessity to be subsidized (in public housing/public education or government grants and/or long-term loans).

Despite the fact that higher education has a long history of unaffordability—recently tempered by government sub-



"And a special word of thanks to you dedicated parents. Where you dug up the 100,000 clams to cover this four-year gig is a mystery to us."

Dennis O'Brien, *president emeritus of the University of Rochester, is a frequent* Commonweal *contributor. His* All the Essential Half-Truths about Higher Education *will be published next fall by the University of Chicago Press.*

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Mary Winters

Kids Get the Day off from School

Through the canyons
of the garment center
        march the twenty million.
A ticker tape parade
for the masses: rats.

The king and queen
with their children
        in an open convertible
smiling and waving,
the car loaded with bouquets.
        Rats on duty in the subway
cheer through the grates:
a dynasty known for
        its ability to procreate,
a great-great-great-etc.
aunt's footprint
        found with a dinosaur.

        What counts
is a new generation.
The rodents'
        genealogical chart
a pyramid with an ever-
broadening base.
        The Adam and Eve rat
at the top,
never in any sense
        thrown out of Paradise.

sidy—I think that the current situation is different and drastic. When discussing the extraordinarily high cost of higher education today, it is not cost alone that is an issue; it is the cost plus the social demand. When no one wanted to go—or even dreamed of affording tuition—the "high cost" was, in a sense, a nonissue. In the meanwhile, colleges and universities have become somewhere near one hundred times more complex and sophisticated. Middlebury *circa* 1844 had 1,500 books in the library, no scientific equipment, no gymnasium, and five ministerial faculty. Contemporary colleges have extensive libraries—often in the millions of volumes—cyclotrons, computers, football stadia, and cadres of highly trained specialist faculty. No wonder they are more expensive.

Why the *current* stir about unaffordable higher education? Some of it is illusion: the really high price spread is limited to about one hundred or so of the three thousand American colleges and universities. Harvard (or Middlebury) is not all of higher education, so it is merely titillating to think college must cost $28,000 per year and up. Most folks go to public universities—many of great distinction—where the tuition price is more likely to be $2,800 and down. Nor is private higher education all at the Harvard price: many smaller collegiate institutions, including many Catholic colleges, are priced at one-half to two-thirds the expensive Ivies. Then, community colleges are substantially free.

Except that there is no free lunch or learning. Anguish about "the high cost" of higher education needs to distinguish with pellucid clarity *cost* and *price*. The *cost* of delivering the product—instruction plus library plus sweeping—is more or less the same at public and private institutions of the same scope and caliber. It is the *tuition price* that differs and startles the consumer. But if parents protest tuition at pricey private schools, taxpayers protest the cost of public education. Recent drastic cuts in public university budgets suggest that taxpayers are as reluctant to pay for public higher education as individuals are for high-tuition private colleges.

If the current *price* structure of higher education annoys tuition payers and taxpayers, what are possible scenarios for the future?

- *Private colleges will be utterly priced out of the market.* That's unlikely for the really high-priced institutions. Princeton is nowhere near setting a "market clearing price" (the price that is so high that it exhausts the number of potential buyers). This is a sempiternal truth for institutions of high prestige. Someone will pay (almost) anything for Ivy-ish credentials. The pressure in the private realm is on second-tier, often moderately priced institutions of lesser "prestige." Their competition is the public institution in the next county which is currently a real bargain. However....
- *Public universities will boost tuition.* A harried public university president told me that his budget had been cut so drastically that he no longer considered his institution a state university, even a state-supported university—"state-located" was the best he could suggest. Given the closing down of the state treasury, public institutions have already and will continue to increase tuition sharply. Out-of-state tuition for some of the flagship state universities is already at $10,000—at a level with the modest-priced privates.
- *Private and public higher education will become financially*

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similar. United States private universities already are heavily dependent on government funding. A major research university may receive—through research funding, government grants-in-aid to students, and federal loan programs—more than half its aggregate income from direct or indirect government sources. *Public* universities, on the other hand, often receive only modest funding from their home state. The University of Vermont gets about 16 percent of its budget from the state; only 25 percent of UCLA's budget is state-funded. If the state does not/will not fund, high-tuition *public* education is the likely result.

I am reasonably confident that these predictions will prove accurate. Students at public institutions will pay more in tuition, because taxpayers will pay less. (President Bill Clinton's tax break for college education is a Band-Aid at best—and since he is also advocating higher education for everyone, I cannot imagine that either the federal or state tax resources can keep pace with that possibility.) Some equalizing between public and private price will benefit the privates, assisting them in deaing with falling applications and high financial-aid costs. Unfortunately for taxpayers and tuition-payers alike, these sorts of changes do not alter the aggregate economics. Nothing so far said lowers the total *cost of delivering* higher education. If taxpayers and individuals combined are not willing or able to pay for all this academic elegance, inexorable economic pressure will lower the aggregate cost. Can that be done?

There are two opposite scenarios for greater efficiency in higher education: command economy or demand economy. Saint John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, approximates a command economy: there is a fixed four-year curriculum, all faculty teach across the curriculum, all students take the same course of study. Theoretically this is 100-percent efficient, no redundancy. At the opposite pole is a demand, free-market curriculum. Community colleges approximate this model. It is also 100-percent efficient in theory because faculty are appointed only on an as-needed basis: no tenured redundancies. Of the two models, I expect the free-market model to prevail since a command model requires the sort of philosophical consensus that modern universities find virtually impossible to reach. Thus, it is reasonable to forecast:

- *More adjunct faculty*: part-time instructors employed on an as-needed basis. This avoids long-term, costly tenure contracts and present fringe benefits. This cost-cutting strategy is already widely practiced, and regarded as "scandalous" by traditionalists.
- *Out-sourcing*: a refinement of adjunct faculty. Instead of a labor market of free-lance adjuncts, some bright soul will create the Einstein Consortium, so that colleges can outsource physics as they do food service.
- *Programmed instruction*: technology has a history of replacing costly services. Programmed instruction in the past has been awkward and amateurish. No more. I have reviewed

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a CD-rom precalculus course offered for credit in one state college system. It has compelling graphics and contains everything, including the homework and final exam.

● *Microsoft U.*: Bill Gates announces the opening of fifty colleges in the major cities—all instruction on sophisticated computers and interactive television.

It all sounds implausible? Nothing could have been more implausible to Lyman Chandler than half the "common school" graduates attending colleges at one hundred times the price. And will Microsoft U. be a good thing or a bad thing? In the minds of its patrons (and providers?), higher education seems to have become a "necessary" in the past

A vocation for Catholic higher education?

Tuition, room, and board for many Catholic universities runs on average between $20,000 and $25,000 per year. The cost of tuition continues to rise faster than both income and inflation. Add transportation, books, fees, and other miscellaneous expenses, and the total cost of a four-year bachelor's degree often tops the $100,000 mark at the most prestigious schools. About 60 percent of students at all private four-year institutions receive some form of financial aid, and about half of all students are forced to borrow to meet expenses. The steep debt incurred over the course of four years typically requires many times that number of years of repayment. Given this expense, many fear that in the years to come only the most affluent may be able to afford a Catholic college education.

This cost should be placed in the context of the growing income inequality between the rich and poor in our society. On June 19, 1996, the United States Census Bureau reported that since 1968 the average income of households in the bottom 20 percent of earners rose a mere 0.8 percent (from $7,702 to $7,762) while the average income of the top 20 percent of earners rose a staggering 44 percent (from $73,754 to $105,945). The economic value of a college degree continues to rise as the widening income gap between those with and those without a degree demonstrates. College, more than ever, is a long-term financial investment that, on average, pays substantial economic dividends. But the rising cost of this education, coupled with the economic benefits that it yields, raises questions about the relation of Catholic universities to the poor and less affluent.

Add to this combination of the escalating costs of college education and the rising income inequality in our society, the danger of increasingly isolating college students from the poor and making them less sensitive to poor people's proper worth and rightful claims. Catholic higher education should not become simply one more familiar route for the recycling of the upper middle class, in essence no different from other private universities. Catholic universities cannot simply be places where well-to-do students receive a good education in order to assume their place in the next generation of corporate and professional elites. How does education of the relatively affluent (and sometimes the absolutely rich) relate to concern for those on the other end of the social and economic spectrum?

Two theologians, Jon Sobrino and John Henry Newman, have something to say about the inevitable tensions underlying this question. According to Jon Sobrino of San Salvador's Central American University, compassion must have the central place in the life of the Catholic university. College students and universities themselves must learn to embrace the "preferential option for the poor." Sobrino argues that if the Catholic university is to exist in a world of massive suffering and not function simply as an "ivory tower," it must be committed to the poor. Far from paternalistic philanthropy, the preferential option entails solidarity—identifying with the poor, being converted by them, and participating in movements for their empowerment. If the Catholic university does not actively side with the poor in appropriate ways, it will tacitly side with the *status quo* and reinforce present structures of injustice, oppression, and exclusion.

The university is a place where students and faculty search for the truth, make discoveries, and communicate findings and insights to the wider world. Sobrino believes that speaking the truth is the best remedy for social injustice. Above all, knowledge must be put at the service of the poor. Only in this way is the Catholic university's true catholicity affirmed—that is, its openness to the worth of all people and not just the economic elite.

The Catholic university cannot therefore be understood in Sobrino's analysis as the scene of "value-free," politically neutral intellectual activity. It should be conceived Christocentrically—in light of the Cross and as an expression of Jesus' uncompromising love for the poor. Sobrino poses to the Catholic university the question: "What can we do to take the crucified people down from their crosses?" Whereas knowledge has all too frequently been used to support oppression, it ought now to be put at the service of the poor and for the eradication of their suffering. Not only theology and philosophy, but also political science, sociology, and other disciplines can be taught

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century. "Necessary" has retained its basic economic direction: higher education gets you a job which provides food, lodging, clothing. Higher education is viewed as an economic necessity: acquiring skills for a high-tech job market. If one shudders at education by TV, CD, *et al.*, education *by* technology *for* technology may be just dandy. If traditional higher education (with texts and teachers and all that) is to have a future, it will have to be because it can be shown truly to "elevate and adorn personal character" [*see*, Stephen J. Pope, page 12] and be a genuine "source of much private enjoyment." That is a challenge which makes the financial problems of higher education seem rather simple. □

in a way that gives centrality to the needs of the poor.

Perhaps the strongest challenge to Sobrino's position is found in John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University*. In his fifth discourse, Newman examined the question of the utility value of a college education (something a lot of undergraduates wonder about during final exams week). Human beings naturally desire to know and the principal virtue of the university lies in its service of this need rather than any other. In contrast to even the most learned and intellectually demanding training in the professions and business, liberal education in the true sense of the term is not intended to serve what is beyond itself. This is not to say that it is a good thing for college graduates to be driving cabs or bartending, only that the most important feature of college is how it expands the mind, not the wallet. It is both true and good that higher education and knowledge also provide career opportunities and financial advantages, but these benefits are not the primary object of education.

But what about compassion? Newman regarded knowledge as valuable in itself, whether or not its discovery is either justified directly by utility or, by implication, motivated by compassion. "Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another; good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largess and justness of view faith....Liberal education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman." By "gentleman" Newman meant not a polite person with refined sensibilities, but rather one who has a "philosophic habit of mind" and "a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life..., the connatural qualities of a large knowledge." This "enlargement of mind" continues to be a powerful antidote to bigotry, apathy, and social myopia.

Though a creature of his time, Newman provides a helpful corrective to the danger of an exclusive focus on what Sobrino sees as central, compassion. Insisting that the search for knowledge be motivated primarily by compassion amounts to a drastic elimination of one of the most fundamental features of what makes us human. The university ought to be a place where students come to greater understanding of things worth knowing for their own sakes, a place where the love of learning is not supplanted by other objectives, however legitimate in themselves, and where knowledge is not instrumentalized to other values.

Yet, upholding the intrinsic value of the "enlargement of mind" need not be at odds with acknowledging the place of compassion in the life of an educated Catholic. Catholic higher education includes not only intellectual development but also the further cultivation of those traits that are characteristically Catholic and Christian, including love of God and love of neighbor. If this is true, then we need to recognize that the well-spoken and prosperous professional who makes substantial financial contributions to university development funds but is utterly indifferent to the suffering of the poor should not be taken as a model graduate of a Catholic university. Catholic universities have certainly generated graduates who fit this image, but we ought to recognize this for what it is—a university's success in financial and social terms but not an exemplar of its core ideals. Sobrino is fundamentally correct on this score: The credibility of the Catholic university lies neither in its endowment, nor in its graduation rate, nor in the power and status of its alumni, but in whether its graduates are genuinely concerned about "taking the crucified people down from their crosses."

Most people will agree that to graduate from a Catholic university and somehow not to have significantly enhanced one's ability to think more deeply about the world, one's nature, and one's identity is to have "missed the point" of college. We should regard compassion in an analogous way, recognizing that to graduate from a Catholic college without a more developed awareness of the needs of the poor and one's own social responsibility to them is also really to have "missed the point." Institutions of higher education that are at once true universities and genuinely Catholic must be characterized in terms of both an "enlargement of heart" and an "enlargement of mind."

STEPHEN J. POPE

Stephen J. Pope is an associate professor in the department of theology at Boston College.

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MAKING COLLEGES CATHOLIC

Bishops & academics reach common ground

Alice Gallin

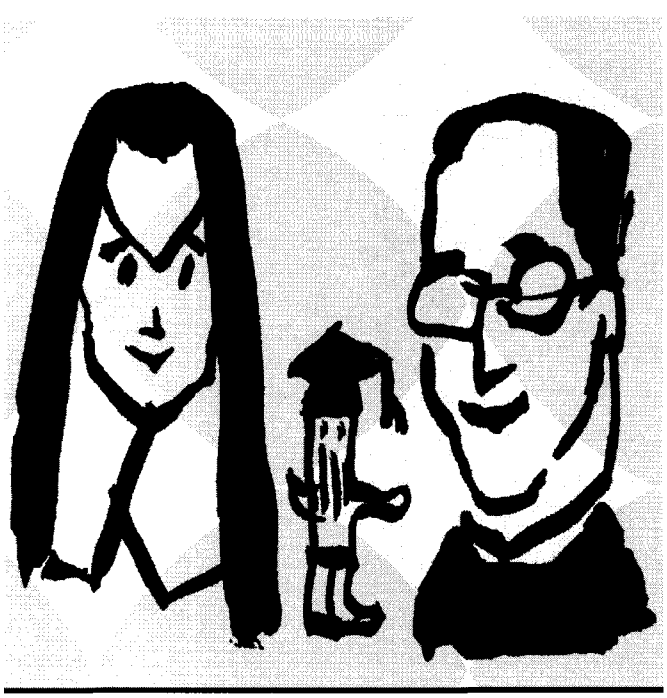
Can the Catholic church in the United States find ways to bring persons of opposing viewpoints to "common ground"? On at least one front, there is good news on that question. Last November 13, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops voted 224 to 6 to approve the work of its committee to implement *Ex corde ecclesiae*, John Paul II's 1990 apostolic constitution on Catholic higher education. The committee had spent six years trying to achieve consensus on how to apply the general norms of *Ex corde* "concretely at the local and regional levels." As a participant in the committee's work, I found its final, peaceful accord an improbable feat, and the overwhelming vote of approval cause for astonishment. There are, I believe, some lessons to be learned.

It was because of the extraordinary differentiation among Catholic universities worldwide that the papal instruction left the details of its implementation to local and regional hierarchies, and added that they should take into account each university's own statutes and, "as far as possible and appropriate, civil law."

But how make it happen? The issues raised in *Ex corde* were contentious. They had been on the table in the United States since the "Land o' Lakes" document of 1967—issued by a gathering of eminent Catholic educators—had proclaimed the need for Catholic universities to have "a true autonomy and academic freedom." Did this mean that a Catholic university need not—should not—have a formal relationship with the hierarchy? With the advent of independent boards of trustees in the late '60s, what replaced the control by religious communities? Who would make final decisions about the Catholicity of the institution, and by what criteria? What was to be done about the perceptions voiced by many within and outside the academic community, liberals and conservatives alike, that Catholic higher education was in danger of diluting or even losing its specifically Catholic character in the drive for academic excellence, academic freedom, government and foundation grants, and more students?

What is most striking about the final committee report by the NCCB last November is not only its content but its authorship. The committee was composed of seven members of the hierarchy "assisted" by eight college or university presidents (*see* box, page 16). These were two groups with differing and conflicting agendas, so that when the two sides first came together in an impressive conference room at NCCB headquarters, the atmosphere was clearly adversarial. The universities had already responded negatively to earlier drafts of the norms. They argued that any hierarchical document imposing church authority on Catholic schools of higher education would damage their standing in the wider academic community, raise legal hazards, undercut their eligibility for government and foundation grants, and deny the intrinsic necessity of academic freedom if a university is to serve the church and society in its research and teaching. At least some educators saw the prospect of ecclesiastical control as threatening the very survival of their institutions.

The bishops' concerns were equally familiar. Their office conferred on them responsibility for safeguarding orthodoxy in theological teaching, for seeing to the moral formation of students, for reminding administrators of their responsibility to the entire Catholic community for their programs and public image. So the issues were partly philosophical—what makes, and keeps, a university Catholic?—and partly "political"—who decides? Who's in charge here? No wonder there was tension at the committee's first meeting. It



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wouldn't have been much higher if each side had brought cheerleaders and a marching band.

Eventually, as I've already signaled, that initial hostility and fear were overcome. But it wasn't easy. Arguments were repeated and rebutted many times over, so much so that over the course of many meetings and consultations committee members more than once wondered aloud whether they had not come to a dead end. When a draft set of norms was discussed at the 1994 meeting of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities—three years after the committee first gathered—Boston College President J. Donald Monan, S.J., spoke of the present "collision course" between the universities, with their concern for professionalism and autonomy, and the perceived need of the Roman curia's Congregation for Catholic Education to extend control over theologians teaching in Catholic universities.

The sticking point all along was the fearsome Canon 812, which reads: "It is necessary that those who teach theological disciplines in any institute of higher studies have a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical authority." *Ex corde ecclesiae* (article 4, No. 3) incorporated the canon: "Catholic theologians, *aware that they fulfill a mandate received from the church* [emphasis added], are to be faithful to the magisterium of the church as the authentic interpreter of sacred Scripture and sacred tradition."

The presidents saw the inclusion of such language in the American norms as a disaster in the making. If it were included, how could they keep a straight face while telling accrediting agencies that their colleges and universities were truly autonomous? Some of the bishops, however, had personal experiences with dissenting theologians that moved them to seek some mechanism for dealing with universities where such theologians taught. It wasn't all that clear, however, that the requirement of a mandate would make a difference. What would it mean—a sort of Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval? Who would give it? What would be the fate of those who did not ask for or receive it? What would a university be expected to do if a theologian's mandate were withdrawn? What about Catholic universities in other countries that have no theology faculty; are they not Catholic?

There were, in short, enough debating points to all but guarantee an impasse. One reason it didn't happen was that all the participants wanted to avoid splitting the nation's Catholic colleges and universities into two groups: (1) orthodox and "Catholic"; (2) not-so-orthodox and therefore no longer to be called "Catholic." The patience of the chairman, Bishop John Leibrecht, was a factor. So also the release of humor; Notre Dame's "Monk" Malloy once dryly remarked that we should begin making plans for our tenth annual reunion. Another time, we resorted to role playing. First, all of us became presidents trying to explain Canon 812 to their theology faculties, and then we all (even the women!) became bishops looking to satisfy the vocal critics of "secularization" on Catholic campuses. Also of help were informal if serious exchanges of views at lunch tables and over coffee. The great chasm began to narrow.

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Following are the members of the Implementation Committee for *Ex corde ecclesiae*, appointed by Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk of Cincinnati, then chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Bishop members: Bishop John J. Leibrecht, Springfield-Cape Girardeau, chair; Cardinal James Hickey, Washington, D.C.; Archbishop Francis B. Schulte, New Orleans; Cardinal Adam J. Maida, Detroit; Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb, Mobile, Alabama; Bishop James Griffin, Columbus, Ohio; Bishop James Malone, Youngstown, Ohio (retired).

University and college presidents: Dr. Dorothy McKenna Brown, Rosement College, Pennsylvania; Dr. Norman Francis, Xavier University of Louisiana; Karen Kennelly, C.S.J., Mount Saint Mary's College, Los Angeles; Raymond Fitz, S.M., University of Dayton; Rev. Edward Malloy, C.S.C., University of Notre Dame; Rev. J. Donald Monan, S.J., Boston College; Dr. Matthew Quinn, Carroll College, Helena, Montana.

Consultants: Alice Gallin, O.S.U., executive director, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities; Msgr. Frederick R. McManus, professor of canon law, The Catholic University of America.

Staff of NCCB/USCC: Sharon Euart, R.S.M., associate general secretary; Rev. Charles Hagan, department of education; Rev. Terrence Toland, S.J., project director.

On substance, a turning point was reached when the committee came to agree that if it were true that the colleges had become less identifiably Catholic, the remedy lay not in preoccupation with theologians but in serious exploration of the criteria of "Catholic identity" in higher education. Thus the discussion moved away from Canon 812 to ways by which the institutions might reaffirm and reinvigorate their mission within the church. The presidents did not question the validity of questions on this theme: whether efforts to recruit topflight scholars have led them to neglect the need of having faculty committed to the university's mission; whether parietal rules had been relaxed too far; whether correct decisions had been made with respect to the recognition of prochoice or gay/lesbian student groups. They insisted, however, that such problems would not be solved by external dicta from the bishops or from Rome. Instead, they approvingly cited such efforts as the "Collegium" program to help faculty appreciate the vocation of scholar and teacher within the Catholic traditions, and a program sponsored by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities to provide workshops for administrators and trustees, with specific attention to the special character of Catholic higher education.

In turn, the bishops on the committee came to acknowledge the need for better processes in judging theologians, more informal contacts with faculty and students, and a better understanding of some of the intricacies of American academic life. It began to seem more possible that the university's fierce defense of its independence and prerogatives could be reconciled with the bishops' pastoral concern and ecclesial responsibilities.

Two other initiatives of the committee were helpful. Three canonists and three theologians were commissioned to prepare position papers on the meaning of "mandate" as the term is used in canon law and church documents. Their findings on the ambiguity of the term led the committee to question how it could be implemented with any consistency or precision.

Then, after committee members reported on their progress to date at the 1994 meeting of the ACCU, and drew largely negative responses from both bishops and academics, the committee hired a "Project Director," Father Terrence Toland, S.J., to "facilitate" local and regional gatherings on the issues, to attend as many as he could, and to collect and analyze the meeting reports. After himself attending one such meeting in the Washington archdiocese, Cardinal James Hickey said it had been a most rewarding experience. Because of his comments and the field reports, the bishops agreed to put aside Canon 812 for the moment, to adopt a more pastoral and less legalistic approach, to focus on the fundamental issues, and to invite the regional meetings to follow suit. That brought satisfying results: the reports compiled by Father Toland showed broad support for colleges and universities that were truly committed to being Catholic, and little or no support for a juridical means of achieving that goal.

At this very moment one of the bishops called attention to an article in the September 1994 *Newsletter* of the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland in which the author, Bishop John Jukes of Strathearn, had suggested reflecting on the goal of Canon 812 and finding a way other than a juridical mandate to achieve the goal. If the goal was to safeguard the faith of the Catholic community, that end could be furthered without interfering in the established system of academic appointments; if a threat to the faith should arise, episcopal action could take place after the fact.

The idea wasn't new—it had been presented earlier by the canonist consultants—but it made a difference, in fact created a major turning point, when a bishop from another country suggested something similar. By this time, moreover, the committee members were able to listen to one another and to contemplate the possibility of a compromise, one that would neither destroy the link between the Catholic university and the church nor endanger the autonomy of the university.

They found the basis for compromise in *Ex corde ecclesiae* itself, in a passage which says that the bishops' responsibility to promote Catholic higher education "will be achieved more effectively if close personal and pastoral relationships exist between university and church authorities characterized by *mutual trust, close and consistent cooperation, and continuing dialogue*" [emphasis added].

These three characteristics are embodied in the norms approved by the NCCB.

- *Mutual trust*: Presidents and bishops affirm a trust in

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one another based on their shared baptismal belief and their joint responsibility to foster it. They achieve the purpose of canon law by seeking qualified faculty candidates who are committed to the Catholic faith tradition or, if not Catholic, are respectful of it. The bishops, for their part, agree to grant due process for theologians in accordance with procedures previously approved by the NCCB for optional use but now affirmed by the conference as the appropriate mechanism.

● *Close and consistent cooperation*: The diocese and the university will cooperate in areas of social justice programs, faith development, intellectual tradition, and campus ministry.

● *Dialogue*: The meetings and consultations fostered by the committee brought deep appreciation for dialogue among bishops, presidents, trustees, faculty, and students; such contacts are to be regularized.

Of the amendments proposed at the November assembly of the NCCB, the one that has attracted the most attention was proposed by Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua of Philadelphia, who was not satisfied with the way that the troublesome Canon 812 had been handled in the norms and asked the conference to provide for its further study. He made clear, however, that he did not intend his amendment to hold up passage of the document.

It happened that Cardinal Joseph Bernardin lay dying in Chicago as the final vote was being taken. All during the '80s he had been an important player in discussions of the issues raised by *Ex corde ecclesiae*; to many of us it seemed that the process we had just witnessed served to demonstrate the possibility of achieving his goal of finding common ground by the dialogic means he urged and exemplified.

That doesn't mean the process is over; avoiding a standoff doesn't mean achieving solidarity for all time. For the moment the ball is in the court of the universities: Do they really want to be Catholic? What will they do about it? Among other things, will they foster mutual trust, close cooperation, and continuing dialogue with the bishops? It is in the bishops' court as well: Will they be partners in dialogue who listen as well as speak? And, when the next problem arises with a theologian, will they accept the claims of due process? And there's another player: Will Rome, in reviewing the norms, trust the judgment of the 224 bishops who approved this way of implementing *Ex corde ecclesiae*?

Time will tell. But something has already been achieved. However self-serving it may appear, I think the work of this committee presents a model of how things can work in the church. Through good will, intelligent debate, good humor, and perseverance, the group worked its way from confrontation based on historic disagreements and seemingly conflicting interests to a mood of mutual trust and respect that issued in basic agreement. Without agreement, the bishops might have faced continued confrontation, and academic leaders might have concluded that there could be no such thing as a "Catholic university." High stakes. □

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Richard Alleva

A SIXTEEN-WHEELER

Branagh's 'Hamlet'

Have you ever been run over by a truck and enjoyed the experience? Well...have you seen Kenneth Branagh's version of *Hamlet*?

Hamlet is a jungle of a play and, as he guides us through it, Branagh refuses to wield a machete. His magnificent, foolhardy movie gives us the text virtually uncut, with all its narrative detours, playful elaborations, obscure allusions, blatant and subtle jokes, topical gossip. Sometimes these elements enrich the play, but just as often they bring its main action to a temporary halt. Consider: during the hatching of the plot to murder his nephew, Claudius remarks that Laertes's fencing has been much praised by a Norman gallant named Lamord, and for twenty-eight dawdling lines the finer points of Lamord are discussed when all we need to know is how much Hamlet envies Laertes's skill. Derek Jacobi as Claudius treats the passage with dispatch, but it is nevertheless forty-five seconds of pure Novocain injected directly into the viewer's brain.

There are about a score of these *longueurs* in the movie—twenty minutes of tedium. Only twenty dull minutes in a four-hour flick? But it is precisely because this *Hamlet* is four hours long that twenty minutes take a disproportionate toll on the attention span.

Branagh was surely aware of the problem as he shot the movie; trying to prevent boredom led him into a problem with his own performance: he's turned the Dane into a bit of a speed freak. At times his fast tempos do capture the manic quality that the prince can legitimately exhibit (the "Get thee to a nunnery" passage works brilliantly at a furious clip), but occasionally they flatten nuances. Though the first half of "O what a rogue and peasant slave" plays nicely as a tantrum, the second half needs a transition into seething expectancy that the actor fails to give it. (But he hits the right note with the concluding couplet.) In the bedroom interview with Gertrude, Branagh is certainly angry enough, but he fails to register the subtler shades of desperation and loathing that this scene—surely one of Shakespeare's greatest—contains. The delivery of "How all occasions do inform against me" is a disaster, turning a scorching piece of self-shaming into a gung ho, up-and-at-'em marital tirade. Doubtless this was because Branagh placed his movie's intermission right after this soliloquy and wanted to give audiences a tingle just before their escape to the lobby. But *Hamlet* is not *Henry V*.

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There are other mistakes, major and minor, including a badly edited final sequence in which Fortinbras's takeover is ridiculously staged as an armed invasion. Shakespeare makes the point (properly underscored by Branagh) that Elsinore has become an armed camp against Fortinbras's approach. Branagh has ten thousand enemy soldiers charge Elsinore castle across an open plain without benefit of Birnam Wood camouflage—and the sentries see nothing until the army gets within the walls! And why was Rufus Sewell, owner of the droopiest eyelids since Robert Mitchum's, allowed to turn the Norwegian prince into an oaf? And why was....

Enough! This *Hamlet* is the most jaw-dropping film ever made from any of Shakespeare's plays. Here's why.

Of all the Bard's productions, *Hamlet* is the one that most resists the unifying hand of the director. It's not the complexity of the hero but the bursting nature of the play itself that is the problem. Where is the center in all this abundance, in this sublime variety show of the questing human spirit? But Branagh has found a center, a unifying idea that works for him and (at least while we view his movie) for us.

This theme is in the very first image: the statue of our hero's father, old King Hamlet. The monument evokes a martial ideal: warfare as an ongoing way of life and a promotion of all the virtues warfare requires—self-sacrifice, sensual restraint, physical vigor, righteous fierceness, unity of purpose. After murdering his brother, Claudius the usurper continues his brother's preparations for war against Norway, but we can see in the soft, sensual face of Derek Jacobi that Denmark has the wrong ruler if Denmark was meant to be a Viking version of Sparta.

And, in fact, Branagh and his designers give us an Elsinore that evokes the Hapsburg dynasty in its late nineteenth-century decadence. Military uniforms are everywhere in the court but they seem to be only fashion statements—even Ophelia wears one. Young men are constantly practicing swordplay within the palace, but it is the sort of fenc-

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ing employed in private duels, useless on the battlefield. Polonius is a stern *paterfamilias* with his children but sleeps with prostitutes on the sly, and his servant Reynaldo is clearly a pimp. There are sliding doors, secret passages, and two-way mirrors in the palace: an Elsinore where courtiers must be so busy outmaneuvering each other that they have no time to strategize against the Norwegian foe. So much for self-sacrifice, sensual restraint, martial vigor, unity of purpose.

And so, in this context, when the ghost summons Hamlet it's not just a call for personal vengeance but a demand that the son restore the martial integrity of the state. But, as Branagh portrays him, is the prince the right man for the job? Branagh, both as actor and director, makes us understand clearly why it is a "cursed spite" that Hamlet was born to set the times right.

I have found some fault with the star's performance but, at its best, it is a successful portrait, not of a man paralyzed by indecision or an oedipal complex, but of a mettlesome, high-pitched nature sent zig-zagging out of control by the fury coursing within him. And it's not just fury that deprives this Hamlet of his internal compass. There's too much life in the man for him to be an agent of death. When he should be detaching himself from events long enough to plan strategy, he instead savors the nuances of the moment. Using the beautiful lower range of his rather limited voice, Branagh speaks the first soliloquy, "O, that this too, too solid flesh," with a delectation of sadness that warns us that this man will never take the necessary steps to end that sadness. In the graveyard, Branagh's hushed appreciation of the passing of all earthly joy gives us a vivid look at the self-thwarting nature of the prince. A man aware that death converts all flesh, whether Caesar's or Yorick's, into dirt fit to "stop a beer barrel" might very well be a good ruler. (Frederick the Great and Winston Churchill surely had this awareness.) But any man who too keenly savors such awareness will probably never rule. Like Elsinore itself with its hectic military preparations, Branagh's Hamlet aspires to the sword in vain. The kingdom, under Claudius, is waylaid by its corruption; the prince by his sensibility.

How well Branagh understands and cinematically exploits the two-track nature of the play, the parallel unfolding of melodramatic action alongside mental frenzy and exaltation. We see the prince about to murder the praying Claudius, and he does!—a sword thrust right through the skull. But, wait, no, that was only a visual leap into Hamlet's mind. The very next shot pulls us back into reality and the prince's doubts. Let Polonius ploddingly read Hamlet's love letter to Ophelia aloud to the king and queen and we hear only a stylized piece of whimsy ("Doubt thou the stars are fire"), but when Branagh intercuts the recitation with a glimpse of Hamlet and Ophelia making love, we experience the heat of passion beneath the rhetoric.

To praise the cast justly would require another article. Suffice it to say that I found Kate Winslet frighteningly believable as the mad Ophelia burbling obscenities and endearments. Richard Briers undercuts our standard notions of Polonius by endowing the old man with shrewdness and venom. Nicholas Farrell is a burning Laertes. Derek Jacobi's Claudius is a supreme study of the connection between evil and weakness, while Julie Christie's Gertrude explores the callousness that can grow out of sexual infatuation. Michael Maloney creates the best Horatio I've ever seen: a commoner warily treading amidst aristocratic skullduggery. And, with the exception of Robin Williams's cutesy-poo Osric, all the celebrity guest-starring pays off, especially Charlton Heston's First Player, the very model of a magniloquent actor-manager, and Jack Lemmon's Marcellus, making every syllable of the "bird of dawning" speech poignantly pierce.

Underpinning all this acting and the aptly lush costuming (Alex Byrne's) and photography (Alex Thomson's) is the eclectic score of Patrick Doyle, which employs clever pastiches of Brahms (the final funeral hymn) and Bernard Herrmann (the duel) to excellent effect.

The poet Karl Shapiro once wrote that being reviewed by the critic Randall Jarrell was like being run over by a truck that didn't hurt him. After being run over by this four-hour epic, I rose quite unbruised from my seat and felt like shouting, "Run me over again, Branagh! Run me over again, Shakespeare!" □

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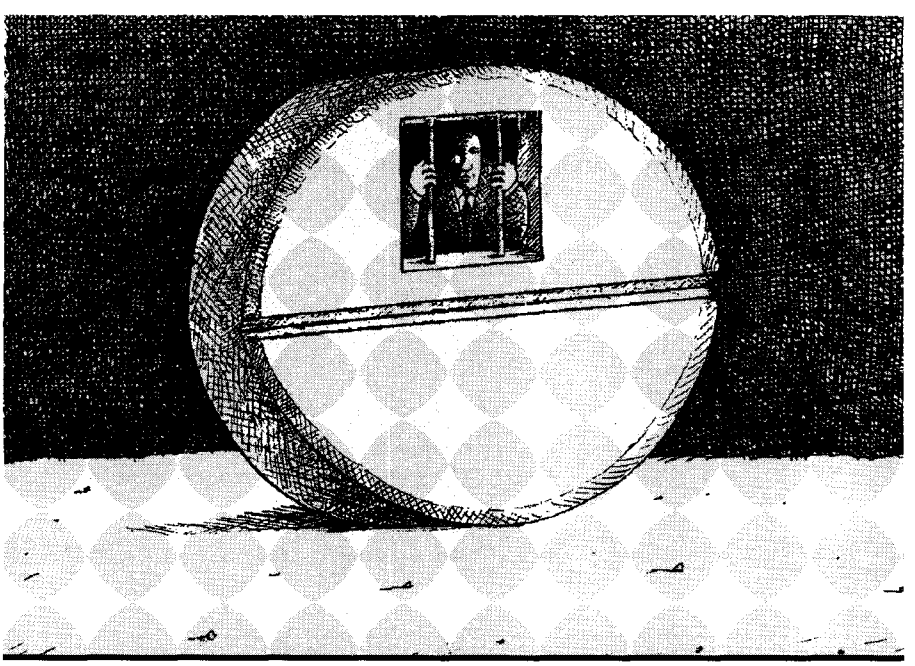
The Power to Harm
Mind, Medicine, and Murder on Trial
John Cornwell
Viking, $24.95, 321 pp.

Robert Coles

We are intent, these days, on exploring the physical basis of the mind, the hitherto impenetrable mysteries of the brain. The organ of our body that has learned so very much about all the other organs which, in their sum, make life possible for us, has at last begun to know a good deal about itself. To be sure, our inquiry into the mind has a long way to go, and even at the end of this next millennium may well fall far short of its goal. For some of us who trained in a psychoanalytic psychiatry, the shift in interest from what Freud (ever the prophet) called his "metapsychological" constructs to a biological way of regarding human behavior has been surprising, unnerving—even as we have witnessed (experienced with our patients) the increasing therapeutic capability that a considered psychopharmacology can offer. Lithium, for instance, has a dramatically constraining or tempering influence on manic-depressive psychosis. With each year the list of drugs available to a psychiatrist grows longer—though many of them prove to be far less useful, over time, than early reports of their action and the consequences of their use had suggested. Some medications, alas, have turned out to be duds or worse (distinctly dangerous for certain patients).

None of those drugs has quite achieved the prominence, demonstrated the promise, or commanded the clinical prevalence of Prozac. Prozac has become a cultural symbol of our neediness, our hopes—meant to banish all the anxieties and worries and fears that prompt millions of us to take a host of antacids, pain-killers, tranquilizers. It can also be seen as a symbol of our meliorist expectations, fantasies that inform the late twentieth-century life of the world's richest, most powerful nation. But there is another side to all of this: a particular drug's limitations and its side-effects—indeed, the contra-indications to its use that psychiatrists must consider as they try to figure out who should take what medicine for which kind of psychological distress. As the English essayist and investigatory journalist John Cornwell lets us know in the very title of his book, a drug that alters the way the brain functions can potentially have "the power to harm"—can undo the fragile ways that troubled people have learned to deal with the urges that beset them from within, never mind the rages the outside world stirs in all of us as it presents its frustrations and disappointments, its social and economic challenges and obstacles.



In mid-September of 1989 Joseph Wesbecker went on a murderous rampage. Armed with several automatic guns, he entered his longtime place of employment, the Standard Gravure printing company, located next door to the *Louisville Courier Journal*, sprayed bullets everywhere, killed eight people, injured others, and shot himself dead. Soon enough, his life would be examined by reporters and public officials, by physicians and lawyers. The families of those hurt or murdered initiated a liability lawsuit against the Eli Lilly Company of Indianapolis, because Wesbecker had been taking Prozac before he ran amok. The trial that took place did not attract much national attention, but John Cornwell, an Englishman, came to witness it, and what he saw and heard and learned through the interviews he conducted, the reading he did, the reflection prompted by this melancholy, grue-

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some event and the court proceedings it set in motion, informs this clearly written, exceptionally instructive book.

Before we are taken by the author to the trial (whose proceedings provide their own compelling story), we are introduced to Wesbecker and to the company where he worked so long and so hard. His was, unsurprisingly, an extremely vulnerable life from the very beginning—abandonment and abuse, a childhood of loneliness, sadness, fear, pain, confusion. As I read this account, sensitively rendered, I was reminded of the "juvenile delinquents" with whom I used to work when I was training to be a child psychiatrist—and of the words of my ever-so-wise supervisor, Abe Fineman. He once told a group of us hospital residents: "The big miracle often is how well some of these kids eventually do, given the horror of their lives. The big mystery is why more of them aren't more of a danger to themselves and the rest of us." He was, of course, reminding us of the resiliency to be found in many individuals who have endured great pain. Still, as he also insisted again and again, each of us has that proverbial snapping point, and it is the purpose of this book (as it was the Louisville trial) to explore the possible reasons for Joseph Wesbecker's sudden, savage spree.

The lawyers for the plaintiffs (the families of those maimed or murdered) argued that Prozac had substantially undone a man who had admittedly been severely troubled for many years, but who had somehow kept up a semblance of normality. In contrast, the Lilly Company, as a defendant, through its lawyers, insisted that Wesbecker had long been an agitated, moody, sullen person, had been diagnosed as a manic-depressive, had been treated by a succession of psychiatrists, and so ought not be regarded as a victim, somehow, of Prozac's impact on his psychology. In that regard, we get a detailed account of Wesbecker's personal life, with an emphasis on his complicated psychiatric history. We also learn how demanding, stressful, and at times scary his work was—he often put in double shifts in a job whose circumstances many of us would find hard to imagine, let alone endure.

Moreover, we are brought to the courtroom as witnesses, courtesy of a writer's narrative skill and energy. Cornwell attended the trial daily for many weeks, and this longest part of the book becomes, finally, a moral fable—scenes pile upon one another, interviews fill in intervals of delay, adjournment. Eventually we reach a climax, or really, anticlimax: the hugely rich Eli Lilly Company, afraid that it might lose not only a trial but tons of money (the reputation of its popular Prozac tarnished, and consequently, a plunge in its sales), fights not only in open court with high-priced, fancy lawyers, but behind the scenes. A settlement is reached, but without the knowledge of the judge, and in such a way that there is reason to wonder whether the lawyers for the bereaved families have themselves been paid large sums, so that they end up arguing less forcefully than might have been expected, hence a jury's unwillingness to call

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SUMMER 1997

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Prozac and its manufacturer guilty. The judge concluded that justice had been circumvented by a brazenly manipulative maneuver. There are, as Strindberg reminded us, "crimes and crimes." Wesbecker's terrible descent into gun-wielding carnage is one sort of crime, but Lilly's apparent decision to take no chances that it might lose a case, and thereby a hunk of its profits, is certainly another.

The rest of us should also struggle with the other questions this book brings to mind: what does cause our Wesbeckers to crack, and why do others, no less victims of fate, chance, circumstance, of hurt and suffering at home, of callousness and cruelty at work, nevertheless stay the course, live decent lives, unblemished by wrongdoing, never mind an outburst of homicidal abandon?

At the end of his book, John Cornwell tells us of a journey he took, while in Louisville, to nearby Gethsemani, where Thomas Merton once lived in monastic isolation. He reads Merton's *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* in the monastery's library, and Merton's words, his expressed willingness to connect himself to other worlds, no matter their remove morally and spiritually from his own, have a telling impact upon this talented, ethically introspective observer and writer, who has tried hard and most successfully to make the rest of us think about why people do harm (with guns, or sometimes with the money and power they have to do an end-run around our judicial system). □

Robert Coles's *most recent book is* The Moral Life of Children *(Random House).*

CHRISTIANITY 101

The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship

George Marsden

Oxford University Press, $22, 137 pp.

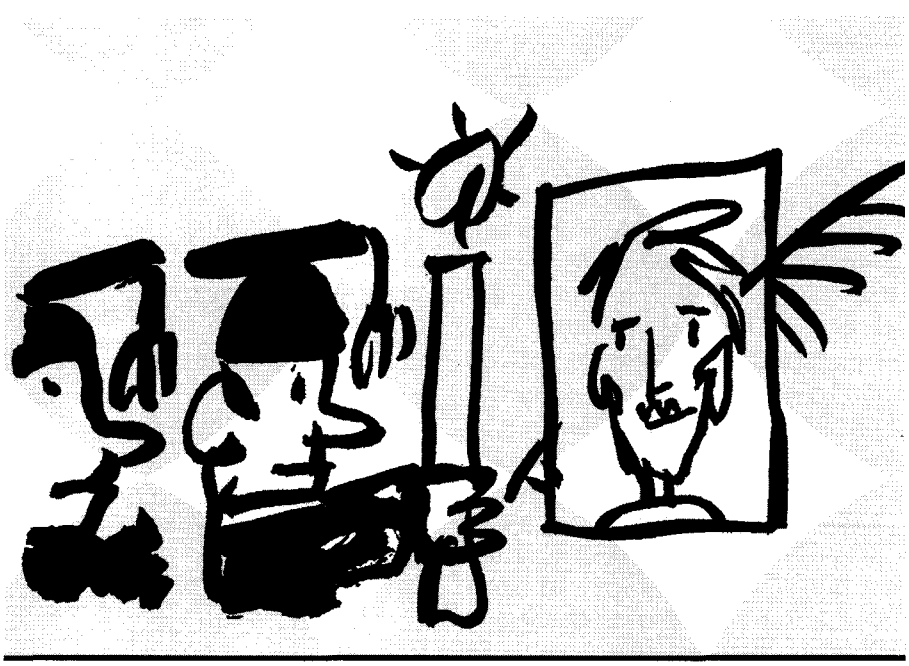
Diogenes Allen

It is instructive to compare George Marsden's book to Newman's *The Idea of a University*. Although subsequently a cardinal of the church, and commissioned by the pope to found a national Catholic university for Ireland, Newman argued that philosophy, not theology, ought to be the centerpiece of the university. Newman believed philosophy should help overcome the fragmentation of knowledge and be a constant reminder to the university community of larger questions concerning human purpose. Newman also strongly argued for the vital function of theology in the university. Its specific contribution to the larger university community was to prevent the tendency of various special subjects, say economics or a natural science, to make imperialistic claims.

Marsden does not mention a specific role for philosophy or theology in the university. Nor does he argue for a Christian world view as the central organizing principle. For Marsden the role Newman assigned philosophy and theology is to be played by Christian scholarship in all subjects. Marsden accepts "pragmatic liberalism as the *modus operandi* for the contemporary academy." But liberalism should not be regarded, as it now is, as excluding all religious points of view *a priori*. There is such a thing as Christian scholarship, and Christian scholarship has a contribution to make to the intellectual inquiry.

The Enlightenment understanding of the universe as self-contained, the attempt to separate public life from religion, combined with the Protestant ascendancy which considered the study of the humanities as a sufficient religious surrogate in public life, once rendered the notion of a Christian scholarship as outrageous and even ridiculous. In his first three chapters, Marsden seeks to rebut objections to the idea of Christian scholarship. In a pluralistic society with the demise of the Enlightenment notion that all legitimate scholarship is uniform and the increasing recognition that all knowledge is contingent, Christian scholarship has a legitimate place in the university, just as feminist and African-American scholarship do.

In chapters 4 and 5, Marsden seeks to encourage academics who are Christians



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to take responsibility for becoming Christian scholars, rather than hiding their light under a bushel. Again and again, Marsden stresses that if one is convinced that the universe is created, it must affect one's scholarship. In the technical aspects of a subject this would not likely show, but in judgments of value, Christian conviction would make a difference. Often the difference is muted, because a great deal of Christianity has been absorbed into secular perspectives. Perhaps the clearest places where Christian convictions are evident is in motivation and, as Newman pointed out, in the unmasking of the tendency to make absolute claims. A Christian motivation can affect the questions a scholar chooses to investigate and encourage a particular concern for students.

Perhaps the most telling way to make a case for such a thing as Christian scholarship is to show that a number of fine examples of it actually exist. Marsden gives considerable space to reporting examples such as the work of Charles Taylor and Roger Lundin. I could add a number in addition to those Marsden cites, including Marsden's own work as an historian.

The closing chapter, "Building Academic Communities," makes the important point that the full contribution of Christian scholarship to the university cannot be made without institutional support and organization. In my own field, philosophy, I know only too well how true this is. In spite of the contribution of many individual scholars, it was only with the founding of the Society of Christian Philosophers that the significance of a distinctive Christian perspective has been recognized as making a vital contribution to the subject of philosophy of religion and, even more broadly, to the subject of philosophy.

Although this book is written as a response to the controversy caused by Marsden's *The Soul of the American University* (1994), it is in its own right an exciting and thought-provoking work for anyone who cares about the future of the university and education today. □

Diogenes Allen *teaches at the Princeton Theological Seminary.*

DIZZY WITH ECSTASY

Reading Jazz
A Gathering of Autobiography, Reportage, and Criticism
Edited by Robert Gottlieb
Pantheon Books, $37.59, 1,068 pp.

Frank McConnell

My all-time favorite Dumb Review Sentence is from the late fifties' Chicago *Sun-Times*, on Leonard Feather's important book, *Inside Jazz*. The reviewer, enthusiastic to the point of illogic, blurted, "If there were no other book on jazz, this would be the one to have."

Right.

I mention that because my enthusiasm for Robert Gottlieb's *Reading Jazz* is, if anything, fiercer than that of the hapless *Sun-Times* reviewer: so, writing this, I am fighting heroically the urge to burble similarly.

Reading Jazz is simply—no, complicatedly—wonderful. There has been so *much* good writing about jazz, by the players and the critics alike: probably because jazz, of all music, is a music that, if you love it, you love it beyond measure. Known, respected, and played around the planet by now, it paradoxically retains the cachet of an *insider's* thing, a wry secret shared between the players and the crowd. A rock or pop concert is a licensed revel—and there's nothing wrong with that; a classical concert is a secular liturgy—the essential flip side of carnival. There is no such thing, really, as a "jazz concert." In a fifteen-table bar—the ideal venue—or in the Hollywood Bowl, a jazz performance, if it *is* a jazz performance, is less performance than intimate conversation: a seminar for thousands. In this, as in so much else, the music is the defining American art, melding—as we keep hoping America itself will—absolute democracy and absolute, ferocious individuality.

Gottlieb's book catches or incarnates that peculiar, unnamable aura. No important writer on the music is unrepresented here, regardless of their often violent disagreements with one another. Jazz lovers are famously partisan. It would be silly to list them all—though I can't help tipping the hat to the brilliant Stanley Crouch, Gary Giddins, and Dan Morgenstern. It's enough to say that this is not only the best book about jazz I've seen, but the first really satisfactory anthology of jazz criticism, as essential and invigorating as the *Rolling Stone History of Rock and Roll*, but with the difference that this book was put together by just one guy.

It's much more than that, though. Gottlieb divides his collection into three equal sections, as his subtitle indicates.

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The "Autobiography" section is thirty-three reminiscences by some of the crucial figures in the saga: Louis Armstrong being his wonderful self, Duke Ellington being—how could he not?—florid and elegant, Miles Davis being a mean-spirited monster of ego, Art Pepper being chillingly frank about the ravages of heroin on his life and his music. And more. What emerges from this cacophony, as in New Orleans ensemble playing, is an ultimate harmony: all these great players lived in the music. From the valiant to the vile, they did burn with a fierce, sometimes steely passion. When Ellington titled his autobiography *Music Is My Mistress*, he was being characteristically flamboyant: but he was not at all joking.

The second section, "Reportage," is a compilation of sketches, profiles, and reminiscences about the music and the musicians, from the legendary King Oliver (Armstrong's patron and chief influence) through the years of the Big Bands to the formation of "modern" jazz (bop) in the forties and beyond. Among the gems are Whitney Balliett's splendid portrait of the underappreciated Dixieland clarinetist Pee Wee Russell, Ralph Ellison's memories of Minton's Playhouse in New York, the club where bop was born, and Gene Lees's narrative of a recording session with the ebullient, force-of-nature Dizzy Gillespie. Gems, as I say, but in a tiara. (Only Jean-Paul Sartre, writing on the essence of jazz, seems to be a little behind the beat: but that itself, to us gallophobes, is oddly satisfactory.)

The third part of the book is "Criticism," and here Gottlieb's plan begins to reveal a central, though not a crucial, flaw. Just what is the difference among autobiography, reportage, and criticism—when the subject is jazz?

Is there an art where personality, life-story, and craft are so intimately intermixed as in this one? I think not—except, perhaps, in literature. I've learned, painfully over many years, that good writing is about 90 percent voice and 10 percent debris: find your voice and you're in like a burglar. But jazz—forget the harmonic analyses and the learned comparisons to Baroque counterpoint and modal composition—*is* voice, and voice, and voice alone. Anyone truly entranced by the music—trust me, it's the only way to listen—hears voices: the voices of the masters, Louis, Dizzy, Bird, Tatum, Zoot Sims, Mulligan; and, in second-line players, combinations of those voices.

Rock groups are named as concepts—as marketing labels. Symphonic ensembles are named for the cities that sponsor and maintain them: the Philadelphia, the Boston, the—under Georg Solti—all-but-unapproachable Chicago.

And how are jazz groups named? "Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five"; "The Benny Goodman Quartet"; "The Miles Davis Quintet"; or, now, "The Harry Connick Big Band." *Proper* names. Here is a music in which, at its best, individuality and popularity are indistinguishable, in which the pure job of the moment (jazz would not be jazz without recorded sound) is everything, and in which the single self both merges with and rises above the ensemble in which it plays. Emerson would have gone bonkers about this as the truly American art. Whitman, too.

So jazz autobiography, reportage, and criticism are basically—apologies to Gottlieb—the same thing: talk about something we love. And it's the passion—the passion of and for the music—that matters. No other book on jazz catches that magnificent obsession the way *Reading Jazz* does.

The very first jazz recording, "Livery Stable Blues," by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, was released in 1917—eighty years ago this year.

Not to know the music is not to be, in the fullest sense, American. For those who don't know it, this book is an indispensable guide. And for those who do—well, for those who do, it's simply a delight. □

Frank McConnell, Commonweal's *media critic, teaches at the University of California at Santa Barbara.*

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OUR C-FIBERS ARE FIRING

Consciousness and the Mind of God
Charles Taliaferro
Cambridge University Press, $59.95, 349 pp.

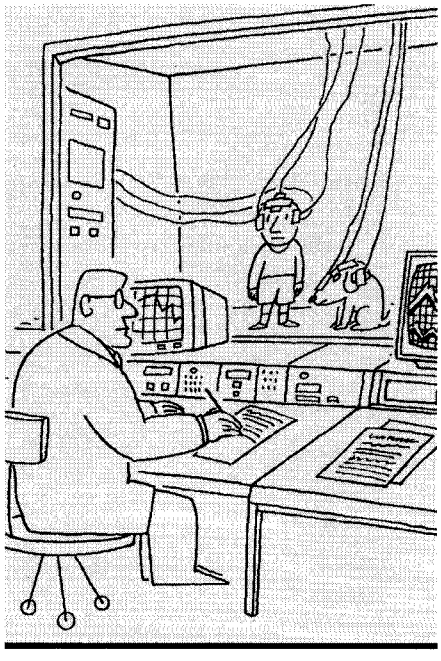
Richard M. Liddy

Strange as it may seem to most conscious people, many neuroscientists and philosophers, speculating on the results of computer-assisted brain research, have concluded that there is no consciousness, no "self." At the most, the self or conscious identity is a creation of "folk psychology," our commonsense language, with no scientific foundation. Conscious activities are mere appearances or "epiphenomena." Science, which deals with matter, countenances no dualism which would allow for a "soul" or a "self" or a "spirit." Of course, if there is no meaning to these terms, even less is there meaning in other realities of folk psychology, such as "God."

To take one of the most prominent of such iconoclasts, Daniel Dennett (*Consciousness Explained*, 1991) maintains that we can describe ourselves in terms of beliefs and desires and personal actions, but these "intentional" activities can only be scientifically explained in terms of more basic accounts in which intentions play less and less a role. Like his mentor, B.F. Skinner, Dennett contends that folk-psychology presumes a *homunculus*, a little person sitting inside us peering out at the world and controlling the inner levers of our activity. We seemingly cannot avoid using such language. Nevertheless, the "explanation" of the behavior of such *homunculi* must be in terms of other smaller *homunculi* who are less intelligent, less bright. Progress is made if we can account for things of high intelligence in terms of "a team or committee of relatively ignorant, narrow-minded, blind *homunculi*." The final payoff is to get to *homunculi* so low that they can be replaced by the purely physical, the mere mechanical. As Dennett puts it, "only a theory that explained conscious events in terms of unconscious events could explain consciousness at all." Any theory that denies such a viewpoint is conveniently labeled a "dualism," and dualism is "not a serious view to contend with but rather a cliff over which to push one's opponents."

It is in order to refute such reductionism that Charles Taliaferro has written *Consciousness and the Mind of God*. His goal is twofold: First, to catalogue the arguments of the various proponents of such scientific materialism; and second, to advance an alternative view that allows for a classical understanding of the person and God.

I would say that Taliaferro admirably achieves his first goal. I do not know of any similar catalogue of the various contemporary arguments of scientific materialism. It is an encyclopedia of contemporary philosophers of neuroscience: Willard Quine, Paul and Patricia Churchland, Richard Rorty, Steven Stich, etc. With Rorty these writers look forward to a time when scientifically enlightened people will not say things like "I'm in pain," but rather something like "my C-fibers are firing."



What struck me as I read Taliaferro's book is the prevalence of such philosophy. It is "in possession" of many of the philosophical and scientific citadels of our country. Nineteenth-century mechanistic determinism may have disappeared with quantum mechanics, but reductionist views of science are very much with us. So much so that even some theologically inclined Christians maintain that we should rid ourselves of dualistic notions of the person and do our theologizing solely on the basis of scientific materialism. Any dualism, it is felt, denigrates the body and results in an excessively individualistic view of human life.

In opposition, Taliaferro's second goal is to provide a positive alternative to all such views. His is not a Cartesian separation of mind and body, but rather what he calls an "integrative dualism." "The overriding aim of this book may be summed up as a defense of the view that persons are not identical with their bodies and God is not identical with the cosmos, and yet persons and bodies, God and the cosmos, exist in a profoundly integral union." Taliaferro describes his view as the level-headed compromise between materialism and idealism. "Midway between the extremes of radical idealism and the austere materialism just documented lies dualism."

Taliaferro defends the legitimacy of appealing to conscious experience. Of course, the appeal to experience tends to be theory-laden, that is, guided by an hypothesis on the character of experience; but Taliaferro provides us with no clear hypothesis on the relationship of the experiences of scientists to our ordinary conscious experience. He does not clarify the meaning of his terms: experience, science, consciousness, knowledge, intentionality, etc. He prefers argument. And among such

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arguments he includes an appeal to a theistic framework within which to understand the interwoven character of physical and mental life. Of course, to a convinced materialist this must seem hopelessly quixotic, supporting the obscure with the seemingly even more obscure.

At times this book evoked for me the image of interminable late-night arguments of college students on "the existence of God." The issue is eminently important, but one has the suspicion that the antagonists are going about it in the wrong way. Framing the issue in terms of the validity of "dualism" can miss the point that both sides of the argument can be carried away by their imaginations: a "picture thinking" not only about "souls" but also about "science."

For as I read this book, I kept asking myself, "Instead of starting from sensations and argumentation, as Taliaferro tends to do, why not start from the central act that is presupposed by Dennett and the others: that is, the act of understanding from which all explanatory scientific theories spring?" On this basis one can formulate what it is that scientific understanding is achieving in the different sciences and also how those sciences are related to each other and to the ultimate aim of understanding. In other words, in a dialogue with scientifically aware people the first appeal must be to the facts of scientific awareness. Clarifying in a rigorous manner the very processes by which Dennett and the Churchlands arrive at their theories can provide a basis for a verifiable theory of conscious experience. The dynamic structure of such consciousness is prior to the results of any computer-assisted brain research and provides the norm by which such research is critiqued and evaluated.

By beginning with an analysis of conscious understanding one is by that very analysis clarifying the distinction between the material and the spiritual. The material is intelligible but not intelligent; the spiritual is intelligible and intelligent. As Bernard Lonergan once cryptically phrased the issue when asked at a public meeting about "the biological basis of thought":

> The biological basis of thought, I should say, is like the rubber-tire basis of the motor car. It conditions and sets limits to functioning, but under the conditions and within the limits the driver directs operations.

I found it significant that there is no mention of Lonergan's analysis of consciousness, particularly his *Insight: An Essay on Human Understanding*, in Taliaferro's book. And yet many of us feel that Lonergan's is the most rigorous and comprehensive analysis of consciousness in this century. (Presently the University of Toronto is publishing the twenty-two volumes of Lonergan's collected works.) I feel Taliaferro's encyclopedic work would have profited from a familiarity with Lonergan's. □

Richard M. Liddy, *a priest of the archdiocese of Newark, teaches at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.*

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A WISE INVESTMENT

The Rise of Christianity
A Sociologist Reconsiders History
Rodney Stark
Princeton University Press, $24.95, 246 pp.

Carl L. Bankston III

At the end of the fourth century, when the newly Christianized Roman state had begun to prohibit the pagan cults, Q. Aurelius Symmachus, prefect of Rome, submitted a moving plea to the Emperor Theodosius for tolerance of the old religion. Under the old gods, according to Symmachus, Rome had achieved world leadership and the gods of the fathers remained the guarantors of Rome's prosperity. In any case, he argued, truth was a mystery that could be approached by many paths. His eloquence was to no avail. A religion from the edge of the empire was to displace the gods almost completely from the state and from Western history.

The question of how Christianity managed this takeover is one of the central mysteries of the history of religion, and perhaps Symmachus might find some consolation in the variety of scholarly approaches to this mystery. Rodney Stark's recent book brings some of the freshest and most exciting of these approaches to bear on the question. Stark, a leading American sociologist of religion, draws on sociological reasoning, as well as on the quantitative methods of the social sciences, to investigate Christianity's early years.

Nonmathematical readers may approach the book without trepidation: Stark uses numbers judiciously, and the methodology is readily comprehensible. He views the problem of the rise of Christianity as a set of interlinked puzzles to be solved by logic and calculation. The first of these puzzles is that of the religion's spread. Stark questions the idea that Christianity became a dominant religion through sudden mass conversions and demonstrates how, as converts accumulated, a steady rate of growth could lead to a sudden rapid increase in the percentage of Christians.

Another puzzle involves the class identity of the early Christians. Was pre-Constantinian Christianity a proletarian faith or a religion of the relatively well-heeled? This is a question that dates back to Gibbon. Stark uses the results of his research on modern cults to argue that cult adherents come primarily from privileged backgrounds. Cultural innovators, he maintains, tend to be fairly sophisticated individuals, with little attachment to conventional faiths. His arguments on this point are intriguing, and do help us to see the development of Christianity in the light of comparative religion. At the same time, though, one might wonder whether conversion to Christianity was really comparable to contemporary conversion to Krishna consciousness or scientology. Given the rigid class boundaries of the late empire, it seems possible that the spread of Greco-Roman Christianity may have had more in common with the spread through India of Buddhism or Islam, both of which offered ideological escape from entrapment in the lowest castes.

Stark's most ingenious argument concerns why people kept converting to Christianity. Roman rule brought people together from all corners of the Mediterranean. This promoted the communication of ideas and of diseases, and the empire suffered periodic epidemics. Two of these, in the latter part of the second century and the middle part of the third, were especially severe and each seriously depopulated the empire. Stark argues that norms of chari-

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ty lowered the death rate in Christian social networks, since simple care for the sick can significantly increase the probability of survival. This also meant that pagans with social attachments to Christians were more likely than pagans without Christian contacts to receive care and survive. With each epidemic, then, the Christian proportion of the population became larger, more pagans were connected to Christian communities, and Christians developed an aura of immunity. The actual physiological immunity enjoyed by surviving believers enabled them to move freely among the diseased, seemingly with miraculous protection.

Peter Kropotkin maintained that altruism is a source of evolutionary advantage. Rodney Stark's discussion of epidemics, Christian charity, and conversion provides a fascinating illustration of this thesis. Christian altruism, following Stark, does not make Christianity a religion of the weak, as Nietzsche claimed. Instead, altruistic beliefs provide a basis for a durable social order based on cooperation.

"Looks like religion is here to stay. What's that *supposed to mean?"*

Stark employs the concept of the "religious economy," one of the major theoretical models in the contemporary sociology of religion, to make sense of the high level of commitment of early Christians and to suggest why this monotheistic religion managed to supplant polytheism. From the perspective of the religious economy, religions are firms, producing spiritual goods and supplying these to customers. Some firms, such as faith-healers or cults of the pagan gods, produce goods privately and sell them to consumers. Other firms produce goods collectively through the contributions of all members. For those involved with these firms, demands for self-sacrifice not only help to solve the "free-rider" problem, but they also magnify the rewards available to all and enhance the prestige of the ultimate sacrificers, the martyrs. Religious involvement, then, is not irrational at all, but a product of reasoned pursuit of goals.

This rationalist approach to the history of religion, while intellectually appealing, suggests a difficulty inherent in a strictly sociological analysis of Christianity. One of the essential characteristics of Christianity is its transcendent quality: beliefs about the nature of divinity are not produced by social relationships; rather, social relationships within faith are assumed to be products of individual relationships with divinity. Although Stark does, briefly, defend himself against charges of reductionism by pointing out the importance of doctrine and belief in his account, he does not seem to recognize the philosophical limitations of considering belief simply as a social factor, and not as an expression of a believer's experience of a mystery beyond human society.

From a purely sociological point of view, moreover, Stark's concentration on religious norms may have led him to give insufficient attention to the institutional reasons for Christianity's victory. The Christians and the Mithraists were probably the best organized of the late antique faiths, but Mithraism was too deeply rooted in the military and the imperial bureaucracy to win a spiritual monopoly. To use the language of the religious economy, the competitiveness of an enterprise depends on the structure of its management and the organization of its departments, as well as on its products.

While readers may feel that parts of Stark's book are highly speculative or

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that it underemphasizes some of the critical issues, it provides a welcome new perspective and compelling arguments on events at the heart of Western history. □

Carl L. Bankston III *teaches in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 4)

cultural, and religious conditioning of our time. The important lesson brought home from the Beijing Conference is that women can no longer remain outside the decision-making process of any institution that affects our lives, whether in government, culture, or religion. As Mary Ann Glendon put it, "Beware of the policies manufactured far away from public scrutiny and without input from the people most concerned."

MARY LOU QUINN
Emerson, N.J.

Give us (women) a break

Mary Ann Glendon ["Feminism & the Family," February 14] and Margaret O'Brien Steinfels have now published several cover articles in major Catholic magazines in which they have stereotyped and attacked the women's movement of the 1970s. One must put oneself into the context of the times. Many of us were not sent to college because it was a waste of money. Our status was determined by our husbands. We did not have the self-esteem to see being single as an option. Our career choices were: nurse, teacher, secretary. With few exceptions, the smartest of us did not think of becoming an engineer or a lawyer.

In most parts of the United States, things have not changed much. The percentage of women at Harvard Law School is not indicative of overall societal change. In our school district, we have had a total of two women school board members in the sixteen years I have lived here.

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Glendon and Steinfels grossly underestimate the power of the male establishment. Most men would be more than happy to continue controlling the church, corporations, and government and to have women continue focusing on the family.

I find these authors' disparagement of the women's movement deeply disappointing. As leading Catholic women, members of a determinedly patriarchal church, I expect more of them.

CAROL DELLMAN-ANDERSEN
Silver Lake, Ind.

The author replies:

An article I published in *America* [July 6, 1996] did criticize the women's movement while acknowledging its many positive achievements. As Mary Ann Glendon's article in *Commonweal* shows, and I think the experience of many women verifies, the women's

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WTSUM98

movement as promoted by NOW, NARAL, Emily's List, etc., does not represent the interests—political, social, economic, or ethical—of all women. Women's interests are more varied and more complex than these one- or two-note organizations seem to realize. There are new generations of women who face issues that are different from those that confronted women of the fifties and sixties—to say nothing of the long-neglected, still-neglected problems of poor women, women of color, immigrant women, etc. To argue that we need a new and better women's movement simply recognizes that some real reforms were achieved and many more are needed. If Ms. Dellman-Andersen finds women underrepresented on her local school board, she might consider running herself and/or encouraging other women to do so.

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Seminar—I

"THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD TODAY: A CARMELITE COMMENTARY" will be the topic for the Eleventh Annual Seminar on Carmelite Spirituality at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, on June 15-21, 1997. The seminar is presented by the Carmelite Forum and sponsored by the Center for Spirituality. Presenters are: Kevin Culligan, OCD; Keith J. Egan; Constance FitzGerald, OCD; Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD; Ernest E. Larkin, O. Carm.; Vilma Seelaus, OCD; and John Welch, O. Carm. For a brochure, contact the Center for Spirituality, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-5001; telephone: 219-284-4636.

Seminar—II

THE CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY AT SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, Notre Dame, Indiana, will present the seminar "The Cross: A Christian Tradition" on July 5–10, 1997. The seminar will explore the Cross as the great symbol of redemption in the Christian tradition. Presenters are John C. Cavadini, Elizabeth A. Dreyer, Peter J. Gorday, Kathryn L. Johnson, Nathan D. Mitchell, and John T. Render. For information, contact the Center for Spirituality, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-5001; telephone: 219-284-4636.

Position Available

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TEXT & CONTEXT

Kurt Shaw

According to the Bible, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel killed Naboth and stole his vineyard after the farmer had refused to sell the king his land (1 Kings 21). On the one hand, the story is simple, and I remember my Sunday school teacher explaining it to me, his gray beard trembling with rage. But over the last two years, I've read the story carefully twice—once in a Salvadoran refugee village, and once at Harvard Divinity School—and I've found that how we understand it teaches us as much about our own values as about the history of Israel.

The books of Kings, especially the legends about Ahab, reflect a crisis in Hebrew life. The kings oppressed the poor and served other gods. The prophets cursed them. Yet God did not punish the kings and the poor received no land, no food, no justice. The Hebrews wrote the books to answer an impossible question: "Why does God withhold his hand?"

As a dozen Salvadoran refugees and I huddled in the shade of a rusty awning, we asked the same question. The army killed Archbishop Romero as he said Mass. It killed dozens of nuns, six Jesuit theologians, and thousands of other Christians. Years after the war, the rich and guilty live on lavish estates or in Miami condos while the poor scratch at barren land.

"When they took my land, they didn't kill me. I'm luckier than Naboth, I guess," frowned a small man after his wife closed the Bible she had been reading. Several heads nodded agreement.

"Stop whining!" cried a woman's voice from the shade. "So King Ahab took Naboth's vineyard and that bastard D'Aubisson took our families' land. What do we do? What will God do?"

My friend Mercedes, the organizer of the Bible study, is defensive about God. Mercedes fought with the Marxist guerrillas during the war, but now walks the countryside "talking about the God of the Poor," as he puts it.

"Well," he stammers to the woman, "Elijah came and cursed Ahab, right? Said he and all his children would be eaten by dogs, right? And D'Aubisson died of cancer, which isn't quite dogs, but...."

The conversation went on until the shadows lengthened, the wind cooled, and the women and men could return to the fields. When we stepped out into the afternoon sun, no one had recovered her farm, no new revolution had started, and Christ had failed to come down on clouds from heaven to judge the unjust. But somehow, something was better.

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news to the poor," smiled Mercedes, perhaps a little sadly, as we walked up the mountain to the small hut he so kindly shared with me. "Jesus didn't make much justice today, but at least he got us talking."

At Harvard, Naboth's story also got us talking. Matthias, a German who knows more Jewish history and Hebrew grammar than your normal gentile, helped us through the rough Hebrew verb forms, the strange idioms, the historical context. The more we read and talked, the more inadequate Mercedes's group seemed to me. The Spanish translation was appalling; the Hebrew conveyed Elijah's urgency and anger so much better. And how could we have talked about Naboth's motivations without considering the Israelite land-tenure system? The land belongs to God, who distributes it equally to all the children of Israel; to sell the land is to create inequality and to sin against God. We talked about Queen Jezebel and Canaanite influences on Israelite politics, and debated how we should understand Elijah's curses. But in spite of my new knowledge, I felt something missing from the classroom.

As we pieced together the Hebrew text, I thought how Mercedes would love that knowledge. I remembered the woman who had lost her father's farm to the government, how she too thought of the land as a gift of God. Again and again, I have come across verses that would make powerful tools in the hands of my friends in Central America.

I don't doubt that the Harvard interpretation was true to the facts, but it is obviously not sufficient. At Harvard we examined the inner workings of the text, but in El Salvador the Bible worked on us, transforming us into people who might "do justice and love kindness and walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8). Being true to the facts can break down old prejudices about what the Bible means, but obsession with those facts often makes us deaf to the book's commands.

As Matthias taught me more about Ahab and Jezebel, my fury at their injustice grew—not so much because the writers of Kings made me empathize with Naboth, but because I came to see El Salvador reflected in that vineyard. Two years at Harvard have molded my Sunday school teacher's anger and Mercedes's sadness into something more ambiguous and honest. Yet anger and sadness must stand behind the academic facts if we are to listen to the tale and be true to God. □

Kurt Shaw *studies Bible at Harvard Divinity School. He studied liberation theology in El Salvador, Honduras, and Colombia.*

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July 14 - July 25

Issues in Youth and Young Adult Ministry
- Michael Horan

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June 23 - July 31

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- Jeffrey Siker
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June 27 - 28
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For more information contact: **Center for Pastoral Life**
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